

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 8, 10, 11 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over JP 2-71084 (JP '084). Applicant has cancelled Claims 1, 2, 8, and 10, without prejudice, thereby rendering this rejection moot with respect to these claims. However, with respect to Claims 11 and 17, Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited reference fails to disclose or suggest all of the features defined in independent Claims 11 and 17. More specifically, JP '084 fails to disclose or suggest a vehicle that is "a rear-wheel drive vehicle," as recited in both independent Claim 11 and independent Claim 17. Additionally, with regard to Claim 11, JP '084 fails to disclose or suggest a rear-wheel drive vehicle in which "the disk and/or rim of the front wheel is greater in thickness than that of rear wheel." Finally, with regard to Claim 17, JP '084 fails to disclose or suggest a rear-wheel drive vehicle in which "the front wheel is 10% - 60% greater in rigidity than the rear wheel."

First, with regard to both Claims 11 and 17, JP '084 fails to disclose or suggest a vehicle that is "a rear-wheel drive vehicle," as defined in both of these claims. Instead, JP '084 is specifically directed to improve steering performance caused by under-steer in *front-wheel drive vehicles*, by using wheels lighter in weight for the rear wheels than for the front wheels, while using wheels of greater strength for the front wheels than for the rear wheels. In contrast, the object of the invention of independent Claims 11 and 17 is to improve the steering ability in *rear-wheel drive vehicles* by enhancing the capability of vibration

convergence of the front wheel using a difference in rigidity between the front wheel and the rear wheel.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 11 and 17 are each directed to a vehicle, and not merely to a tire wheel set. Accordingly, the language reciting that the claimed vehicle is rear-wheel drive is not merely an intended use. Instead, such language defines a structural difference between the vehicles of Claims 11 and 17 and vehicle of JP '084 (e.g. the drive mechanism in a rear-wheel drive vehicle is connected to the rear wheels and not the front wheels). Accordingly, such language patentably distinguishes Claims 11 and 17 from JP '084. Thus, for at least this reason, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §013 rejection of Claims 11 and 17 under JP '084.

Additionally, with regard to Claim 11, JP '084 fails to disclose or suggest a rear-wheel drive vehicle in which "the disk and/or rim of the front wheel is greater in thickness than that of rear wheel." Instead, JP '084 only appears to disclose that the front wheels are of greater strength and weight than the rear wheels, and that such greater strength and weight is achieved by having more spokes in the front wheels. JP '084 does not appear to even mention varying the thickness of the disks/rims between the front wheels and the rear wheels. Moreover, JP '084 does not disclose or suggest that greater strength and weight may be achieved by using thicker disks or rims for the front wheel than those used for the rear wheels.

Further, there is no disclosure or suggestion in JP '084 of the existence of the problem solved by the vehicle of Claim 11 (reducing vibration transmitted to the front wheel

from the front tire in a rear wheel drive vehicle), nor is there any disclosure or suggestion of the specific solution defined in Claim 11 (making the disk and/or rim of the front wheels thicker than the disk and/or rim of the rear wheels).

Thus, for at least these additional reasons, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 11.

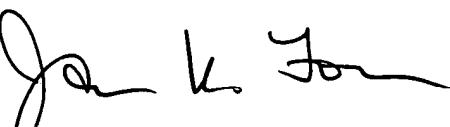
Finally, with regard to independent Claim 17, Applicant respectfully submits that JP '084 does not disclose or suggest a rear-drive vehicle in which "the front wheel is 10% - 60% greater in rigidity than the rear wheel." Applicant respectfully submits that because JP '084 is directed to minimizing understeer in a front-wheel drive vehicle, any optimization that takes place would be directed to minimizing understeer. Applicant further submits that optimizing to minimize understeer in a front-wheel drive vehicle would, most likely, result in an optimal rigidity difference that is different than that defined in Claim 17 because the objective of the device of independent Claim 17 is to improve vibration convergence of the front wheel in a rear-wheel drive vehicle. In other words, because the devices are different (front-wheel drive vs. rear-wheel drive) and the objectives are different (minimizing understeer vs. improving vibration convergence), the resulting optimal rigidity difference when optimizing the vehicle of JP '084 to meet its intended objective would not be the same as the resulting optimal rigidity difference defined in Claim 17, which is for a different intended objective. Accordingly, for at least this additional reason, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 17.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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